

done up to that time, regardless of the reason it has not been done, suddenly becomes the most important action that could ever occur and has to be done in the last few days. We have had enough experience of knowing that many times those things don't turn out as well as they should.

I am hopeful we will deal with these things with as much time and knowledge and opportunity to participate as possible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION, AND RURAL ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2001—Continued

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the bill before the Senate now is the committee-reported farm bill, a 5-year farm bill. It is a comprehensive bill providing major improvements to the farm commodity and income protection programs, conservation, rural economic development, trade, research, nutrition assistance, renewable energy, credit, and forestry.

The legislation is within our budget limitations for the new farm bill. We were allowed \$7.35 billion for fiscal year 2002, and \$73.5 billion for 10 years above baseline spending. The bill is fully within those limitations. I hope we can move forward and work our way through this bill. We are, of course, ready to consider amendments tomorrow and debate the issues and pass the bill, go to conference, and send it to the President. The sooner we can get the amendments debated here and voted on, the sooner we can get to conference.

There is a need to move ahead with this bill now. Farmers around the country need to know what the farm program will be for next year so they can make decisions, arrange their financing, their loans, line up their input and supplies for next year. It is important for farmers to get this legislation passed.

It is important for all of America to get this bill passed because, as has often been said, it all really does start on the farm. With food being such a critical commodity for our own people but also in our trade relations, it is necessary that we send clear signals that we are going to have a meaningful farm program for next year and the year beyond.

That is part of the reason. There is another reason why we have to move ahead. That is the area of conservation. Some of the critical conservation programs are out of money. The wetlands reserve program, the farmland protection program, and the wildlife habitat incentives program are out of money now. The longer we wait and delay on the farm bill in getting it to the President to get it signed, that means that more and more we will have a backlog of needs in all of those areas of conservation.

The environmental quality incentives program is underfunded and far short of resources that are needed. The bill before us would substantially increase funding for all of these important conservation programs. However, if we don't pass it soon, the USDA will not be able to carry out effective programs during the present fiscal year.

In addition, this bill will provide important and immediate help in the areas of rural economic development, trade, and research, as I mentioned. We need to move ahead without delay.

I will take the time now to discuss some of the principal features of the bill. In order to proceed to the bill, tomorrow I will be offering a substitute amendment that will include modifications to the dairy and conservation provisions of the legislation reported from the committee. That will be an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Hopefully, there won't be any objections to that, and then we will move ahead with amendments to that as the underlying bill on the floor.

First, title 1 on commodities, the bill continues direct payments but adds countercyclical contract payments to assure that in the years of low prices, producers will receive additional support. The bill establishes income protection prices for each of the contract commodities. If the price for the commodity plus the direct payment for the year falls below the income protection price, producers would receive a countercyclical payment to make up the difference. For the first 2 years, the direct payments would be generous enough that there will be no countercyclical payments. For the third, fourth, and fifth years, the direct payments will be lower but the difference would be made up by the countercyclical payments in those years.

Quite frankly, this was really the goal of the Freedom to Farm bill that was passed in 1996. That would be direct payments; that those payments would phase down at some point. As we saw because of low prices, world conditions, other conditions, the Congress had to come in year after year after year and pass emergency funding legislation for direct payments and to add to those direct payments.

What we should have had at the start was a countercyclical program so that in times when prices are good, you don't need all those direct payments. But when prices are low, that is when you need to come back in.

When Freedom to Farm first passed, there were farmers who, quite frankly, had a pretty darn good year and prices were high, but they got a direct payment anyway. That didn't seem to make very good economic sense or policy sense. So I understand that we can't pull the plug right now. We continue the direct payments. They start to go down, but in place we have the countercyclical payments that come in in case prices are low; we all hope prices stay high. But in case they do go down, we do have the countercyclical

program. We also attempt to have additional countercyclical support through the loan program.

Our bill raises loans for every commodity with one exception, extra long staple cotton, which was held constant, and for soybeans, which we reduce from \$5.26 a bushel to \$5.20 a bushel. Again, all of this was an attempt to balance loan rates so that one would not be encouraged to plant one crop over another to plant for the loan benefits.

For other crops, the loan programs have discouraged planting of some crops, such as barley, oats, dried peas, and lentils. Those crops received better treatment in this bill, including a loan rate boost for feed grains other than corn and a new loan program for dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas.

The bill gives producers the option of retaining their current contract acres and adding oilseeds or updating their contract acres and payment yields.

They will be given choice. Farmers can upgrade their base acres in yields or they can remain with the ones they have. Farmers who have taken advantage of flexibility to switch to other crops will not lose base acres. Those who are of fewer acres covered by the current production flexibility contract will be able to update those acres and their payment yields.

In the area of dairy, the bill includes supplemental income assistance payments for dairy farmers. That is a system of payments designed to assist providers in the northeast part of the country that will help compensate for them getting out of and off of the Northeast Dairy Compact. In addition, there is a national dairy payment program for the remainder of the country. I might add that earlier on in the day the Senator from New Mexico was talking about a national tax and a payment by dairy farmers. That is not in the substitute bill that I will be offering tomorrow. I hope those who looked at the earlier version will look at the substitute because that taxing provision is not included.

American sugar producers have been facing sugar prices at or near 22-year lows for most of the past 2 years.

Our committee bill reestablishes marketing allotments for sugar in an attempt to limit domestic production levels that, with imports, will not exceed the demand for sugar for human consumption. The bill also provides the Secretary with the tools she will need to bring sugar production in line with demand.

The committee bill makes a dramatic change in the program for peanut producers to bring it more in line with other commodity programs. The bill abolishes marketing quotas. That has been a staple of peanuts ever since I have been here—for the last 27 years. It establishes a new system of peanut base acres and payment yields. The new program creates a safety net for producers in the form of marketing loans, direct payments, and countercyclical supports. So basically, the

peanut program will be phased out and the new one will be phased in and it will be similar to other commodity programs.

Finally, the commodity title provides for higher levels of purchases of fruits and vegetables for distribution through the important nutrition programs such as the National School Lunch Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Next, dealing with title II, conservation, in addition to producing food and fiber, America's farmers and ranchers are also our stewards, playing a critical role in protecting natural resources for future generations. This new farm bill recognizes that conservation is a cornerstone of sound farm policy. It will greatly increase our commitment to helping agricultural producers and landowners to protect and conserve soil, water, air, and wildlife—especially on land that is in production.

Senator LUGAR and I, and many members of the committee, share a longstanding view that the new farm bill should place a larger and much greater emphasis on conservation.

Over the past months, we and our staffers have worked together to develop the conservation title reported out of committee.

I point out that this title was reported unanimously out of committee because it reflects good policy that helps the full array of producers represented in the committee and in the Senate. The substitute I will be offering will build on the committee's conservation title and will add about \$1 billion more in conservation funding to focus additional funding in the 5 years covered by the bill.

The conservation title basically doubles our funding for conservation by adding \$21.5 billion to baseline spending for conservation programs, for a total of \$43 billion over 10 years. We basically double funding for conservation.

Our bill also brings balance to spending on land retirement programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program, balancing that with programs for working lands such as the Conservation Security Program, EQIP, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program.

Our bill will establish a new incentive payment program and the Conservation Security Program, which will both improve farm income and increase agricultural conservation. This program adopts a comprehensive, inclusive national approach to conservation on working lands. It provides incentive payments to farmers and ranchers who voluntarily maintain and adopt conservation practices that are appropriate for the local areas and each individual operation. In this way, we not only retain the conservation achievements of the past, but we encourage increased conservation in the future.

Again, I point out that the conservation and security program is not a top-

down, one-size-fits-all. It is designed to be geared toward the individual farmers in different parts of the country. What may be good for conservation in West Virginia may not be good in Iowa. This bill recognizes that it has to come really from the bottom up, within certain guidelines, and protecting air, oil, water, and natural habitats. But that is basically what the conservation and security program is designed to do, to help farmers with their conservation on the land they have in production.

The acreage cap for the Conservation Reserve Program has been increased from 36 million acres, the present limit, to 42 million acres. The legislation more than doubles the Wetlands Reserve Program. It increases the acreage cap by 1.25 million acres above the current 1,075,000 acres. There is also an allowance for 25,000 acres annually to be enrolled in the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program.

The legislation increases funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which is important to our livestock producers, up to \$1.5 billion a year, which is 7 times over the current figure. So in the critical area of helping livestock producers prevent soil runoff, water runoff, polluting rivers, streams, the Chesapeake Bay, and in other areas, we increase that program 7 times more than what it is right now. Contract amounts have been increased to \$150,000, with a \$50,000 maximum being earned in any year of the 3- to 10-year contract.

Our bill provides for 10 times more funding over the next 5 years for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program than was provided in the last farm bill. We go from \$50 million to \$500 million in that area.

More funding will be provided over the next 5 years for the Farmland Protection Program. This program allows for farmland and the environmental benefits of this land use to be preserved for future generations. The last farm bill allocated \$35 million for the Farmland Protection Program. Our bill increased that amount to \$1.75 billion.

A new Grassland Reserve Program to purchase permanent and long-term easements on 2 million acres of grasslands is also included in the legislation. This program will offer long-term easements, technical assistance, and restoration costs to restore or keep private lands in native grasses.

The legislation provides additional new programs besides the Grassland Reserve Program. The Water Risk Reduction Program provides for purchase of flood plain easements that retard runoff, prevent soil erosion, and safeguards life and property from floods. The Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control will provide demonstration grants, technical assistance, and carry out information and education programs to improve water quality in the Great Lakes.

As chairman, I am proud that we have developed a strong, balanced pro-

posal that greatly strengthens our commitment to conservation as an integral part and cornerstone of our agricultural policy. The conservation title represents a real win for farmers, landowners, and for all Americans who have a vital interest in conserving and protecting our natural resources.

The trade title was put together on a consensus basis in the committee. It was reported out, also, on a unanimous vote. This should go a long way toward improving existing export and food aid programs. We have seen that export markets do not serve as a reliable safety net in and of themselves. But trade is and will continue to be a key outlet for U.S. agricultural products.

Over the last few decades, the U.S. agricultural economy has derived between 20 and 30 percent of its gross income from exports. United States agricultural exports have exceeded U.S. agricultural imports since the late 1950s, generating a surplus in U.S. agricultural trade—I might add, helping our overall balance of trade. So our trade title provides about \$2 billion above baseline over the 10-year period, roughly split between the commercial export programs and the food aid programs. The bill more than doubles existing funding for the Market Access Program, ramping up to \$190 million annually by the end of the 5-year bill. We also put additional resources into the Foreign Market Development Program, which helps our agricultural groups serve customers in overseas markets.

The Supplier Credit Program allows short-term loans to be made directly to importers rather than through a bank intermediary. We allow the length of the loan to be extended from 6 to 12 months.

There is also a strong demand for resources to help educate children in the developing world. The United Nations World Food Program believes that there are some 300 million children worldwide who are not receiving an education due to economic hardships faced by their families. With a desire to address that issue, our bill establishes and funds the International Food for Education and Nutrition Program, within or under the banner or heading of the Food for Progress Statute. This proposal was introduced last year by former Senators Dole and McGovern, long-time advocates of domestic and international feeding programs.

The shorthand phrase for this really is the "international school lunch program." We are trying to develop in emerging nations, in nations that have a need for this, the low-income places, a school lunch program so that families would see that as a benefit to send their kids to school. Right now, a lot of families in Third World countries send their children out to work as an additional income to the family. In the United States, giving a free meal to someone may not be that big a deal since we spend less than 10 percent of our income on food. But in poorer parts of the world, they are spending 60 to 70

percent or more of their disposable income on food. If we can give a free school lunch to a child and maybe give them something to take home, it will not take long for that family to figure out that is a big addition to the family income. It will serve to not only increase nutritional benefits of kids but also serve as a magnet to get them out of the workplace and into schools.

The trade title also provides more resources for the Food for Progress program and reforms and streamlines the operations for all food aid programs run by USDA and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The bill makes it easier in a number of ways for groups such as Save the Children, CARE, and Catholic Relief Services, who run many food aid projects overseas, to do their jobs while still permitting USDA and USAID to monitor them effectively.

Finally, this title also addresses the access of United States agricultural exports to Cuba. While Cuba remains a cash-poor economy, it imports a substantial share of its food, with an average value of \$660 million annually over the last few years. In particular, it is a significant buyer of rice, and prior to imposition of sanctions in the 1960s, Cuba was the single largest market for United States rice.

A February 2001 report by the U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that if we did not have the sanctions on Cuba, Cuba could buy as much as 400,000 tons of wheat, 300,000 tons of rice, and 500,000 tons of feed grains from the United States.

The Commission estimates that U.S. exports to that country could reach about \$400 million annually. By eliminating, as we do, the restriction on private financing of sales of food and medicine in current law, the bill permits U.S. exporters to begin to access this market. Again, there would be no U.S. Government funds involved. This would all be through the private sector. If the private sector wants to finance these sales, let them do it. It would be a heck of a good market for producers in this country.

Next, title IV, our nutrition title. Again, in this title we are talking about something that affects all of America, rural and urban alike. In October, we lost 415,000 jobs in America. The unemployment rate jumped to 5.4 percent. It did that in September, the largest 1-month jump in 21 years. We are facing a recession this winter. We do not know how long it is going to last. Of course, we hope it is not going to last long, but we do not know.

One of the best underpinnings for families who are out of work in America, who are looking for employment, facing some tough times, is a program that has proven its worth year after year, and that is the Food Stamp Program. Along with unemployment insurance, it is the vital part of our front-line defense against recession.

If we are talking about a stimulus package, which we talked about earlier

today and about which we will be hearing more, this is stimulus, making sure that those who are out of work and are seeking employment have the nutrition they and their children need.

It is a travesty that although we have the safest, most abundant food supply in the world—hunger in America has also been reduced in the last 30 years—still 10 percent of America's households face the possibility that they will worry about or actually not have enough food to eat.

The people who are going hungry include the working poor, single working mothers with children, seniors forced to choose between paying for food and paying for prescription medicine, and families forced each winter to choose between heating and eating. With the current economic downturn, we can only expect the situation to worsen.

At this time it is all the more critical that we strengthen our Nation's nutrition safety net. Part of that safety net, as I said, includes the Food Stamp Program, which is one of the most effective and efficient ways to help low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled. It is our Nation's largest child nutrition program since 50 percent of Food Stamp Program participants are children. In addition, fully 9 out of every 10 food stamp households include a senior, a disabled person, or a child.

Our bill provides \$6.2 billion over 10 years for improvements in the Food Stamp Program. It includes several eligibility and benefit improvements, as well as important simplifications to improve the access of working families to the program.

Provisions in the bill accomplish three key goals:

First, to strengthen the program to help people more successfully transition from welfare to work and to help shield low-wage working families from the recession, this legislation extends the period of time that a former welfare recipient is able to participate in the Food Stamp Program without having to fill out any extra paperwork and reapply from 3 months to 6 months.

Second, it extends the period of time that able-bodied adults without dependents may participate in the Food Stamp Program to allow time for them to find and keep a job.

To simplify the program and to lighten the administrative burden and avoid excluding people who qualify for the program, the bill has a number of bipartisan provisions that would simplify the program in areas such as income and resource counting, assessment of expenses for deductions, and determination of ongoing eligibility.

We cut the redtape in the program and increase coordination between other programs, such as Medicaid and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, the TANF program. This is so people do not have to apply for Medicaid, then apply for temporary assistance, and then apply for food stamps. We are trying to wrap it into a one-stop-shop-ping concept.

A third key goal is to make a concerted effort to reach all children who are poor and for whom a proper diet is particularly crucial. It includes a provision that modestly increases benefits for larger size families with children and restores food stamp benefits to all poor legal immigrant children.

The credit title reauthorizes all current direct and guaranteed USDA farm loan programs, and it focuses on providing more credit opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers.

The title also includes other facets of the USDA farm lending programs, for example, by making the interest rate reduction program permanent and providing that reduced paperwork requirements be available to more farmers. To address the credit needs of farmers in this time of sustained low commodity prices, the title expands the time of eligibility for direct operating loans from 7 years to 9 years.

In the area of rural development, title VI, this bill will make a real difference in economic and community development in rural America.

Rural communities have many advantages, but a lot of the time they have not shared in our country's prosperity. For too long, they have lagged behind. Rural America needs facilities and services that meet the standards of 21st century America, from basic services, such as sewer and water, to the basic services we need to compete and live in the 21st century, such as broadband Internet access. Without them, the quality of life in rural communities will be impaired and businesses will not thrive.

One of the largest problems facing rural businesses is the lack of adequate equity capital at competitive rates. While many rural businesses are not directly associated with agriculture, ventures to increase the value of agricultural commodities in rural areas are a great potential as an engine for growth. If these value-added enterprises are largely owned by agricultural producers or co-ops, there is a double benefit of economic growth and increased farm income.

These are some of the key goals for rural development that our committee has been working toward. I will just mention a few of the key provisions.

We fund a new program called the Rural Business Investment Program and a bold new program called the National Rural Cooperative and Business Equity Fund. We provide substantial funding for value-added agricultural product market development grants to help develop solid new enterprises owned by agricultural producers in rural areas.

We improve the business and industry loan guarantee program and establish a new way to fund the Rural Economic Development Grant and Loan Program.

To help smaller communities, the title applies \$100 million a year for broadband Internet access.

We also provide funding for fire-fighting and first responder training

and include a program to clear the large backlog in the USDA sewer and water and community facility program.

In title VII, the research title, the central purpose of the farm bill is to ensure the security and vitality of our food and agricultural system in rural communities. Research plays a vital but often unappreciated role in accomplishing this.

The fact that resources devoted to agricultural research have been insufficient to keep pace with the increasing needs of farms and rural communities has been of great concern to many in the agricultural community.

However, this private sector funding is mostly targeted toward addressing the needs of production agriculture, leaving the needs of many other sectors of the agricultural and rural sector unaddressed. The only way to meet these unfulfilled needs is through allocating a portion of the funds given to the committee to research programs. Therefore, we increase funding for the Initiative for Future Agricultural and Food Systems to \$145 million a year.

We also provide \$15 million a year in funding for a competitive grants program focused on rural policy research. This program will provide research grants on topics such as rural sociology; effects of demographic change; needs of groups of rural citizens; rural community development; rural infrastructure; rural health; rural education; rural extension programs, all of these in a policy research program.

The changing nature of agriculture has created a great need for farmers and ranchers to be able to utilize a wide range of tools such as risk management, precision farming, crop protection, and business planning. The bill provides \$15 million a year for a competitive grants program focused on providing beginning farmers and ranchers the information and the support they need to acquire the kind of knowledge they may not heretofore have received.

The end of the cold war, along with recent tragic terrorist attacks in America, have focused national attention on our vulnerability to biological and chemical terrorism. Agriculture is widely considered to be a vulnerable target for bioterrorism. The committee has therefore included in this title several new authorizations to bolster the Federal Government's biosecurity planning and response capabilities.

Title VIII is the forestry title. We include a sustainable forest management program to provide forest landowners and States assistance to meet multiple resource objectives on private forest lands. Funds may also be used for conservation easements to maintain forest cover and protect important forest values. The title also contains an initiative to help establish private forest landowner sustainable forestry cooperatives.

Title IX, the energy title, is a new title. This has never been in the farm bill before. It is not in the House bill,

but I am hopeful the House will accept it. It was unanimously adopted by our committee. We create a number of initiatives to develop new uses and markets for agricultural products and renewable energy, including biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, biomass, wind, and solar energy.

We include a grant and loan program to help establish farmer-owned renewable energy businesses to market electricity. There is also a grant and loan program to provide financing assistance to farmers so they can purchase renewable energy systems such as wind turbines, solar heat pumps, solar energy, solar electricity or solar water, methane digesters, and to make energy efficiency improvements.

Another program bolsters the development of bio-refineries to convert biomass and agricultural wastes into fuels, chemicals, and power. I believe that renewable energy will become a major cash crop for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities across the country in the coming years. We can provide new income streams for our producers, enhance rural economic development, make environmental and public health gains by reducing pollution, and increase our Nation's energy security. Promoting renewable energy as part of this bill will also change the way we think about agriculture.

I truly believe we can produce just about anything from corn, soybeans, and other agricultural products that we can produce from oil. The energy title will bring us a significant step closer to that end.

I have in my office—the office I cannot get to right now, but hopefully we will get back to our offices sometime pretty soon—a picture that was taken in 1939, the year I was born. It is an original picture of Henry Ford. He has a baseball bat and he is hitting the trunk of a car, a 1939 Ford, with the baseball bat.

This was a demonstration for the press on what Henry Ford considered to be the car of the future. He predicted at that time cars of the future would be made out of soybeans, and the trunk of the car was made from soybeans. So he was hitting the trunk with the baseball bat to show it would not dent, it would not crack, and the baseball bat just bounced right off. So Henry Ford had predicted all of the things that were in a car made from petroleum products would very shortly be made from soybeans.

The war came, and we needed to ramp up our petrochemical industries. We needed petroleum for the war effort. The United States spent trillions of dollars in World War II. We spent a lot of taxpayer money developing the oil industry in this country and enhancing the petrochemical industry of this country.

After it was developed after World War II, it was obviously then much cheaper to make all of these things from oil, to make plastics out of petrochemicals, than it was to make it from our agricultural produce.

I think the time has come to start turning that corner back again, to recognize all of the things that go into an automobile today that are made from petroleum-based chemicals and plastics can indeed be made from—well, it does not have to be soybeans. It can be a lot of other different types of agricultural products. All the steering wheels, all the plastic, all of the stuff that goes in a car can, indeed, be made from soybeans.

This title of this bill is to begin that process of ensuring we can start making more and more of our products for automobiles and for other items from agricultural-based entities rather than from petroleum.

So this energy title is one of the most exciting efforts we have ever undertaken in the farm bill. There are a lot of initiatives: wind energy, for example. We can produce a lot of wind energy in this country, so we provide grants and loans to farmers and ranchers to buy and put up windmills.

One might say, what does that have to do with agriculture? The fact is if we are going to build windmills to make electricity, we are not going to build them in the cities. They are going to have to be built in rural areas. They are going to have to be built where we have farms and ranches. I think this would be a source of income for farmers, plus it would add to the national grid the help from electricity. Biomass, methane production—there is an ethanol plant in Kansas right now that is producing ethanol and their entire heat source comes from good old methane. So there is a lot of it, it seems to me, we can begin doing. I think this is one of the most exciting parts of the farm bill.

Those really are, in a nutshell, the different titles of the farm bill. As I said, every title of this farm bill was voted unanimously in our committee, with one exception, and that is the commodity title.

I understand that people have different ideas on commodities, but what we tried to do in the commodity title was to provide a balance so that one part of the country was not getting an undue amount of money over another. We tried to keep the commodities in balance so a farmer would not be encouraged to plant one crop over another; that they truly could plant for the market and not because one had a higher loan rate than another, that type of thing. So we spent a great deal of time working to balance it, and we did come out of the committee with a bipartisan vote. It was not unanimous. I admit it was not a unanimous vote on the commodities title, but it is a measure of how much work this committee did—I do not mean just this member but Democrats and Republicans did—on this bill. Every single title got a unanimous vote, as I said, with the exception of commodities, and I believe we will be able to work that out.

I have not seen it yet, but I guess Senator ROBERTS and Senator COCHRAN

will be offering an amendment on the commodities title to change it. We will have a debate on that. I have not seen it, so I cannot debate it. We will look at it. We will consider it.

Now, Senator ROBERTS and Senator COCHRAN offered an amendment in committee. That approach was turned down. Whether or not this amendment will be the same, I don't know. I have heard it will be changed, but I have not seen it. We certainly will debate it. I hope we have a reasonable time limit on debate. I hope we don't drag this out longer than necessary. All who have been on the committee understand the different aspects of our commodity programs. I don't think it will take a huge amount of time to debate.

I believe we have a good, sound farm bill that is in the interests of all Americans—not just one area, not just one group, but all of America. I believe some of the things we have done in conservation, which is the cornerstone of this bill, are charting a new path for our farmers, a way where they can actually receive income because they are being good stewards of the land. I believe the new energy title will go a long way to helping make the United States more energy independent in the future.

The new rural equity fund we have set up is going to help bring business, provide the kind of venture capital we need. The money we provide for broadband access to our small towns and communities can be the highway to the new technologies so businesses can locate there.

All in all, it is a good farm bill. Is everything in it exactly as I would like it? Probably not; I would probably make some things different. But everything of this nature represents compromise and consensus. It came out on a bipartisan vote. All titles except one were unanimously approved. It represents a good compromise, a good consensus, a good balance between interests. That is why we are here—to work across party lines, to try to work together, knowing I can't have my way all the time and you can't have your way all the time, but together we work these things out. That is what we have done in the farm bill.

I know we will not have votes today, but I hope tomorrow when we come in we can proceed on amendments. I hope we can have some time limits. I hope the other side will agree. We tried to get an agreement earlier today to say that at some point tomorrow afternoon all first-degree amendments would have to be filed. That was objected to. We will revisit that tomorrow and perhaps reach an agreement. With healthy debate and amendments tomorrow, and perhaps Wednesday, we should be able to finish this bill sometime on Wednesday. I see no reason at all to carry it any further than that, and that is with meaningful debate on amendments.

I encourage all Senators who have amendments on the farm bill to please get them filed so we can look at how

many there are and perhaps reach an agreement on time limits to get this bill out of here by sometime late Wednesday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROCKEFELLER). The Senator from Wyoming.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, as if in executive session, I ask unanimous consent the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, proceed to executive session no later than December 14 to consider Calendar No. 471, the nomination of Eugene Scalia to be Solicitor for the Department of Labor. I further ask consent that there be 3 hours of debate equally divided in the usual form. I ask consent, following the use and yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on the confirmation of the nomination and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HARKIN. Was this cleared on both sides?

Mr. THOMAS. I am not certain of that. I only know this nomination has been waiting now for over 200 days.

Mr. HARKIN. I have to object if it has not been cleared on both sides. Without that assurance, I have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. HARKIN. That being the case, I ask unanimous consent all first-degree amendments to the farm bill be filed no later than 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THOMAS. I object. I am afraid there is not time for all amendments. I object.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. STABENOW). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA AS IT WINS THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, this past Saturday, the University of North Dakota's Fighting Sioux won the division II national championship football game. Anyone who watched that game on ESPN marveled at the game itself. It was one of the most exciting football games I have ever watched. It was decided in the last couple of seconds. The two teams played wonderful football. They played Grand Valley State of Michigan in division II. Grand Valley State had a 14-to-10 lead with just over 2 minutes left. The University of North Dakota actually had a fourth down with 50 seconds or so left at about the 41-yard line. It didn't look good. With 60 yards to the goal line, they passed and went down to the 1-yard line. And they drove it in.

It was one of the most exciting finishes I have ever seen.

As an alumnus of the University of North Dakota, I wanted to congratulate the coach and the team and say how proud we are of the division II football champions.

We have been national champions in division I in hockey many times. We won our national championship in women's basketball, and now in division II football.

The University of North Dakota Sioux had a wonderful day on Saturday. I congratulate these young men who made all of North Dakota proud. And I congratulate their coach.

As a graduate of the University of North Dakota, I am enormously proud of what they have done.

To recap, rare are the athletic programs that can claim the extraordinary success that the University of North Dakota has had over the last year: It has played national championship games in hockey, women's basketball and, on just this Saturday, football.

As a graduate, I'm pleased to be able to announce here on the Senate floor today that the University of North Dakota Fighting Sioux won that national Division II championship football game. And they did so in truly epic fashion, coming from behind in the final seconds.

Their opponent, Grand Valley State of Michigan, had taken a 14-10 lead with less than three minutes to play. After taking the ensuing kickoff, UND appeared to have stalled on their own 41 yard line where it was fourth down and four yards to go. But receiver Luke Schlessner caught a short pass from quarterback Kelby Klosterman, slipped what appeared to initially be a sure tackle, and ran 58 yards to within inches of the goal line. On the next play, with just 29 seconds left, Jed Perkerewicz darted across. It was an electrifying conclusion that marks the Sioux's first national football championship.

As an alum, I have a special affection for the University and am enormously